

Committee on Public Health  
Bill #1254  
March 5, 2007

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We are here representing the Connecticut Electrolysis Association and by the approval of the Board of Electrologist to include the use of laser/light technology as an additional modality for our practices.

Today, technological advances and the state of the art devices in laser and IPL are such that the products are safer to use with positive results for the clients and with little or no side effects. Laser/light companies under FDA approval are touting the words "error-free", and have set parameters in their systems to treat specific skin conditions properly. Today many states do allow the independent use of laser by technicians that have been trained, and some states don't require any training at all.

We as electrologists go through a rigorous training program in order to practice Electrology (permanent hair removal) in Connecticut. Our industry has served the public well for over 100 years. We have been instrumental and successful in implementing regulations and a course curriculum as well as continuing education for electrologists with the intent to protect the consumer.

Our industry is dying and dying very quickly. We have been bombarded with continuing TV, billboard, newspaper and magazine campaigns for Laser Hair Removal. Everyday we lose more and more clients to Laser Hair Removal technicians who don't have our expertise. And if that isn't enough, Palomar in conjunction with Gillette on Dec 7<sup>th</sup> was approved by the FDA for an over-the-counter laser hair removal device. This will be marketed wherever Gillette has a distributorship for razors --Costco, BJ's, Sam's Club, Walgreens, CVS and most pharmacies. This device will retail for \$200.00.

We are being unfairly squeezed out of business. The doctors, the home devices, and the declaratory ruling of 1997 will end us and end us very quickly. Our clients are leaving in numbers. It has created financial hardship for many of us who have been trained and worked so hard to stay in business. Without this new legislation, we will be out of business and in the unemployment or welfare lines.

Some of us live near New York and Massachusetts. For us it's a matter of picking up our businesses and moving over the line to those states to practice because they allow electrologists to practice laser hair removal without the restrictions that Connecticut has. Many electrologists are single Moms trying to stay off the welfare and unemployment lines.

The Declaratory Ruling banning the use of lasers for electrologists was introduced by Terry Petricca, then President of the AEA. The Ruling only allows physicians, RN's and Paramedics to use lasers. This ruling was introduced by a woman who felt threatened that her livelihood was about to be taken away. At the time, laser had just come into the industry and many clients did experience complications, even under a doctor's supervision. Believe me I have seen those patients. The problem was a lack of knowledge by the user as well as the technology. There is a lot more information available today to the technicians and new technology has evolved and continues to improve. We are now hearing "error-free" set parameters for specific types of uses.

I am not alone when I tell you that electrologists feel that we have an unfair trade restriction placed upon us. Most especially when I hear that electrologists are training doctor's offices to use laser and that the doctors are not doing laser hair removal but are allowing their nurses and technicians to do the procedures. This is most disconcerting especially knowing that nurses and technicians do not know about hair and the surrounding tissue.

Without our background in hair removal, the consumer is not being safely or effectively treated. Specific skin conditions/disorders have not been studied, and we have always been trained to work in conjunction with the doctors and dermatologists when necessary. Patients who come to us with rosacea, weeping macules or vesicles, suspicious moles or any other skin condition are always referred out to a physician before we would work on them. This is a standard of practice that we take seriously.

Our protocol for sterilization standards are set forth by the CDC and have been adopted into our by-laws. Electrologists sterilization protocol is at a higher level than laser because it is an invasive procedure and laser is non-invasive.

Dr. Jacobi, Chairman of the Board of Electrologists has given his support and approval for us to use laser in our practice. Unfortunately, the Dr. is on medical leave as we speak and is unavailable.

Please help save our industry.

Lynn S. Brandner  
Licensed Electrologist